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DEPT FOR NEA/ELA MGREGONIS
DEPT FOR NEA/FO ECATALANO
DEPT FOR ISN/RA RNEPHEW

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TAGS: [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [UNSC](#) [IR](#) [JO](#)
SUBJECT: JORDAN: GOJ WILL SUPPORT IRAN SANCTIONS, BUT
GENERAL PUBLIC MAY NOT

REF: SECSTATE 09124

Classified By: Ambassador R. Stephen Beecroft for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) On February 1, the Ambassador reviewed reftel points with Chief of the Royal Court Nasser Lozi and PolChief briefed Personal Advisor to the FM and Director of MFA Policy Planning Bisher Khasawneh. Both Lozi and Khasawneh stated that the Government of Jordan would support USG and international efforts to increase pressure on Iran. However, they also stated that this GOJ action may prove to be unpopular among Jordanian citizens for a number of reasons:

-- Lozi indicated that there will be public pressure not to comply with sanctions, especially given the perceived lack of progress on the Israeli/Palestinian peace negotiations.

-- According to Khasawneh, Jordanians will be skeptical given the perception that sanctions in neighboring Iraq were ineffective against the regime and its policy, but ultimately proved devastating to the people, the economy and "the fabric of Iraqi society."

-- Khasawneh also stressed the "psychological disconnect" many feel about the accepted Israeli nuclear program and efforts to deny Iran the right to develop nuclear power sources.

¶2. (C) Khasawneh emphasized the "delicate nature" of next steps towards Iran. He believes that people in the region feel they are "between a rock and a hard place." While many are concerned about the advancement of Iran's nuclear program, they also will be hesitant about escalating this issue in a region already struggling with a number of serious conflicts. "No one wants this issue to get out of hand."

-- Finally, Khasawneh expressed concern that Israel would play a significant role in international efforts to increase pressure on Iran. "If this happens, the issue itself will become lost and there is a risk that this could become a battle between Islam and Israel."

¶3. (C) Comment: While the GOJ will undoubtedly support USG efforts to increase pressure on Iran, it may seek to avoid a public role on the topic. The GOJ is far more focused on the Israeli-Palestinian issue and may be concerned about the reaction of domestic hard-liners, especially in this parliamentary election year.
Beecroft